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INFO RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 8816
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SUBJECT: TOKYO MEDIA REACTION - IRAN

¶1. LEAD STORIES: Front-page items on Friday morning included yesterday's Japan-South Korea foreign ministerial meeting in Seoul.

¶2. "Unity of Security Council Being Tested" The liberal Asahi editorialized (2/12): "There are no options for Iran, which has been suspected of developing nuclear weapons, other than to win trust from the international community in order to proceed with the peaceful use of nuclear energy. However, Iran has repeatedly taken actions that run counter to that course. President Obama has moved to adopt a new UN Security Council resolution. This is the right diplomatic decision in order to prevent nuclear proliferation.... Trust in the NPT system will be maintained if the Security Council responds appropriately to actions that disregard the treaty.... Disarray among Security Council members would result in weakened diplomatic pressure on Iran. An affirmation of unity at the Security Council would be the most effective weapon to ensure a diplomatic settlement of the matter."

¶3. "Iran Runs Risk of Deepening Diplomatic Isolation" The liberal Tokyo Shimbun argued in an editorial (2/12): "The UN has already adopted sanctions on Iran on three separate occasions. Tehran's latest move to speed up its uranium enrichment is a risky diplomatic gamble that will further deepen its isolation.... It is necessary to discern the course of Iran's brinkmanship. This issue will likely be prolonged. Diplomatic efforts should be continued to convince Iran to come to the negotiating table with possible additional pressure and sanctions in mind."

¶4. "Serious Rift between Conservatives and Reformists" On Thursday's massive clash in Tehran between demonstrators and security troops, a correspondent for the top-circulation, moderate Yomiuri wrote (2/12):

"Iran's Revolution Day was marred by bloodshed this year. Reformists went ahead with a massive rally on what the government called its 'most important' day. As security authorities cracked down on the protestors severely, there is no question that the legitimacy of the revolutionary system led by conservatives has been further undermined. Chances are high that the confusion in Iran will be prolonged."

ROOS